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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Part 948

[Docket No. FV95-948-2FIR]

Irish Potatoes Grown in Colorado; Expenses and Assessment Rate

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture (Department) is adopting as a final rule, without change, the provisions of an interim final rule that authorized expenses and established an assessment rate that will generate funds to pay those expenses. Authorization of this budget enables the Colorado Potato Administrative Committee, San Luis Valley Office (Area II) (Committee) to incur expenses that are reasonable and necessary to administer the program. Funds to administer this program are derived from assessments on handlers. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** September 1, 1995, through August 31, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Martha Sue Clark, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, P.O. Box 96456, room 2523-S, Washington, DC 20090-6456, telephone 202-720-9918, or Dennis L. West, Northwest Marketing Field Office, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, Green-Wyatt Federal Building, room 369, 1220 Southwest Third Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204, telephone 503-326-2724.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This rule is issued under Marketing Agreement No. 97 and Marketing Order No. 948, both as amended (7 CFR part 948), regulating the handling of Irish potatoes grown in Colorado. The marketing agreement and order are effective under the Agricultural Marketing Agreement

Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), hereinafter referred to as the Act.

The Department of Agriculture is issuing this rule in conformance with Executive Order 12866.

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12778, Civil Justice Reform. Under the provisions of the marketing order now in effect, Colorado potatoes are subject to assessments. It is intended that the assessment rate as issued herein will be applicable to all assessable potatoes during the 1995-96 fiscal period, which begins September 1, 1995, and ends August 31, 1996. This final rule will not preempt any State or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with this rule.

The Act provides that parties may file suit in court. Under section 608c(15)(A) of the Act, any handler subject to an order may file with the Secretary a petition stating that the order, any provisions of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order is not in accordance with law and request a modification of the order or to be exempted therefrom. Such handler is afforded the opportunity for a hearing on the petition. The Act provides that the district court of the United States in any district in which the handler is an inhabitant, or has his or her principal place of business, has jurisdiction in equity to review the Secretary's ruling on the petition, provided a bill in equity is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

Pursuant to the requirements set forth in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has considered the economic impact of this rule on small entities.

The purpose of the RFA is to fit regulatory actions to the scale of business subject to such actions in order that small businesses will not be unduly or disproportionately burdened. Marketing orders issued pursuant to the Act, and the rules issued thereunder, are unique in that they are brought about through group action of essentially small entities acting on their own behalf. Thus, both statutes have small entity orientation and compatibility.

There are approximately 285 producers of Colorado Area II potatoes under the marketing order and approximately 118 handlers. Small

agricultural producers have been defined by the Small Business Administration (13 CFR 121.601) as those having annual receipts of less than \$500,000, and small agricultural service firms are defined as those whose annual receipts are less than \$5,000,000. The majority of Colorado Area II potato producers and handlers may be classified as small entities.

The budget of expenses for the 1995-96 fiscal period was prepared by the Colorado Potato Administrative Committee, San Luis Valley Office (Area II), the agency responsible for local administration of the marketing order, and submitted to the Department for approval. The members of the Committee are producers and handlers of Colorado Area II potatoes. They are familiar with the Committee's needs and with the costs for goods and services in their local area and are thus in a position to formulate an appropriate budget. The budget was formulated and discussed in a public meeting. Thus, all directly affected persons have had an opportunity to participate and provide input.

The assessment rate recommended by the Committee was derived by dividing anticipated expenses by expected shipments of Colorado Area II potatoes. Because that rate will be applied to actual shipments, it must be established at a rate that will provide sufficient income to pay the Committee's expenses.

In Colorado, both a State and a Federal marketing order operate simultaneously. The State order authorizes promotion, including paid advertising, which the Federal order does not. All expenses in this category are financed under the State order. The jointly operated programs consume about equal administrative time and the two orders continue to split administrative costs equally.

The Committee met on May 18, 1995, and unanimously recommended a 1995-96 budget of \$62,328, which is \$3,596 less than the previous year. Budget items for 1995-96 which have increased compared to those budgeted for 1994-95 (in parentheses) are: Audit fee, \$975 (\$900), other office, \$625 (\$500), and utilities, \$3,000 (\$2,000). Items which have decreased compared to those budgeted for 1994-95 (in parentheses) are: Assistant's salary, \$8,256 (\$10,320), part-time salary,

\$3,640 (\$3,822), major purchase, \$2,125 (\$2,250), and (\$2,425) for property tax, for which no funding was recommended this year. All other items are budgeted at last year's amounts.

The Committee also unanimously recommended an assessment rate of \$0.0030 per hundredweight, \$0.0006 less than last season. This rate, when applied to anticipated potato shipments of 16,500,000 hundredweight, will yield \$49,500 in assessment income. This, along with \$12,828 from the Committee's authorized reserve, will be adequate to cover budgeted expenses. Funds of \$101,064 in the Committee's authorized reserve at the beginning of the 1994-95 fiscal period were within the maximum permitted by the order of two fiscal periods' expenses.

An interim final rule was published in the **Federal Register** on June 21, 1995 (60 FR 32260). That interim final rule added § 948.214 to authorize expenses and establish an assessment rate for the Committee. That rule provided that interested persons could file comments through July 21, 1995. No comments were received.

While this rule will impose some additional costs on handlers, the costs are in the form of uniform assessments on handlers. Some of the additional costs may be passed on to producers. However, these costs will be offset by the benefits derived by the operation of the marketing order. Therefore, the Administrator of the AMS has determined that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

After consideration of all relevant matter presented, including the information and recommendations submitted by the Committee and other available information, it is hereby found that this rule, as hereinafter set forth, will tend to effectuate the declared policy of the Act.

It is further found that good cause exists for not postponing the effective date of this action until 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register** (5 U.S.C. 553) because the Committee needs to have sufficient funds to pay its expenses which are incurred on a continuous basis. The 1995-96 fiscal period begins on September 1, 1995. The marketing order requires that the rate of assessment for the fiscal period apply to all assessable potatoes handled during the fiscal period. In addition, handlers are aware of this action which was unanimously recommended by the Committee at a public meeting and published in the **Federal Register** as an interim final rule.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 948

Marketing agreements, Potatoes, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Note: This section will not appear in the Code of Federal Regulations.

PART 948—IRISH POTATOES GROWN IN COLORADO

Accordingly, the interim final rule amending 7 CFR part 948, which was published at 60 FR 32260 on June 21, 1995, is adopted as a final rule without change.

Dated: August 1, 1995.

Martha B. Ransom,

Acting Director, Fruit and Vegetable Division.

[FR Doc. 95-19460 Filed 8-7-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-P

7 CFR Part 1126

[DA-95-16]

Milk in the Texas Marketing Area; Suspension of Certain Provisions of the Order

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Suspension of rule.

SUMMARY: This document continues the suspension of segments of the pool plant and producer milk definitions of the Texas order for a two-year period. Associated Milk Producers, Inc., a cooperative association that represents producers who supply milk to the market, requested continuation of the suspension. Continuation of this suspension is necessary to insure that dairy farmers who have historically supplied the Texas market will continue to have their milk priced under the Texas order without incurring costly and inefficient movements of milk.

EFFECTIVE DATE: August 1, 1995, through July 31, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Clifford M. Carman, Marketing Specialist, USDA/AMS/Dairy Division, Order Formulation Branch, Room 2968, South Building, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456, (202) 720-9368.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Prior document in this proceeding:

Notice of Proposed Suspension: Issued May 26, 1995; published June 2, 1995 (60 FR 28745).

The Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601-612) requires the Agency to examine the impact of a proposed rule on small entities. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 605(b), the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service has

certified that this proposed rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. This rule will tend to ensure that dairy farmers will continue to have their milk priced under the order and thereby receive the benefits that accrue from such pricing.

The Department is issuing this rule in conformance with Executive Order 12866.

This suspension of rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12778, Civil Justice Reform. This rule is not intended to have a retroactive effect and will not preempt any state or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with this rule.

The Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), provides that administrative proceedings must be exhausted before parties may file suit in court. Under section 608c(15)(A) of the Act, any handler subject to an order may file with the Secretary a petition stating that the order, any provision of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order is not in accordance with the law and requesting a modification of an order or to be exempted from the order. A handler is afforded the opportunity for a hearing on the petition. After a hearing, the Secretary would rule on the petition. The Act provides that the district court of the United States in any district in which the handler is an inhabitant, or has its principal place of business, has jurisdiction in equity to review the Secretary's ruling on the petition, provided a bill in equity is filed not later than 20 days after date of the entry of the ruling.

This order of suspension is issued pursuant to the provisions of the Act, as amended, and the rules of practice and procedure governing the formulation of marketing agreements and marketing orders (7 CFR part 900).

Notice of proposed rulemaking was published in the **Federal Register** (60 FR 28745) on June 2, 1995, concerning a proposed suspension of certain provisions of the order. Interested persons were afforded opportunity to file written data, views and arguments thereon. No comments were received.

After consideration of all relevant material, including the proposal in the notice and other available information, it is hereby found and determined that for the months of August 1, 1995, through July 31, 1997, the following provisions of the order do not tend to effectuate the declared policy of the Act:

1. In section 1126.7(d) introductory text, the words "during the months of